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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

First Air Quality Alert of the Year Issued for Central Ohio

Air Pollution Levels Expected to be Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups Tomorrow

(COLUMBUS, June 17, 2010) –The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) is issuing an **Air Quality Alert for Friday, June 18**. The region – Delaware, Fairfield, Franklin, Knox, Madison and Licking counties – is likely to experience ground-level ozone pollution levels that are Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups on [the national Air Quality Index \(AQI\) scale](#). Tomorrow's AQI is forecasted to be 104.

Friday marks the first Air Quality Alert of the year. Sunny skies, warm temperatures and light winds will lead to ground-level ozone levels that are unhealthy for certain sensitive groups of people, including people with heart disease, respiratory disease (such as asthma), active children, active adults, and seniors. Ground-level ozone pollution is a colorless, odorless gas produced when emissions from our cars, lawn equipment and industry react together in the presence of sunlight.

MORPC uses the national AQI scale to inform the public about daily ozone and particle pollution levels in central Ohio. The AQI scale runs from 0 to 300—the higher the AQI value, the greater the health concern. When levels reach above 100, air quality is considered to be Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups. MORPC issues an Air Quality Alert to the public when pollution levels reach 101 or higher.

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Working to Build a Better Region

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People with asthma are more likely to suffer an increase in the number and severity of symptoms during an Air Quality Alert. To decrease the potential for health implications, sensitive groups of people are urged to limit prolonged outdoor exertion. People who are experiencing breathing difficulties should consult with their doctor. More information on the health effects of ozone pollution is available at: www.franklincountyohio.gov/health/airpollution.htm and www.publichealth.columbus.gov.

You can sign-up online to receive Air Quality Alert notifications delivered straight to your inbox. Visit <http://airquality.morpc.org> and click on the EnviroFlash logo to start receiving these free notifications. You can be aware of the air you're breathing, and plan your days accordingly.

MORPC recommends taking the following actions to help reduce ozone pollution:

- **Reduce driving and consider using COTA, carpooling, biking or walking to your destinations by contacting RideSolutions at (888) 742-RIDE.** Cars and trucks are major contributors to air pollution in the region.
- **Turn off your engine instead of idling your vehicle to cut down on vehicle emissions that contribute to ground-level ozone pollution.** You will save gas by turning the engine off and restarting it again if you expect to idle for more than 30 seconds. You will also prevent pollution by avoiding long idles. Next time, park your car and go into the bank or restaurant.
- **Refuel your vehicle at dusk.** Filling up your tank when the direct sunlight and heat have diminished helps reduce ground-level ozone pollution
- **Avoid topping off your tank at the gas station.** Spilled gasoline pollutes the air when it evaporates.
- **Consider mowing your lawn on a day when there is not an Air Quality Alert.** Longer grass in your yard is good for the air, as well as the lawn.

MORPC is a voluntary association of 47 local governments in central Ohio serving the region through planning, direct service, public policy information, innovative programming and intergovernmental coordinating services in the areas of transportation, land use, energy conservation, the environment and housing.